

Amendments to the Drawings:

Please add the enclosed one new sheet of drawing (sheet 3/3) to sheets 1 and 2 currently on file. The new sheet of drawing includes new Fig. 3 which shows coupling of the crank systems (Fig. 1) to the side wall assembly (Fig. 2) as described in the original specification at paragraphs [0021]-[0022].

The new sheet of drawing contains no new matter.

Please renumber original sheets 1/2 and 2/2 as sheets 1/3 and 2/3, respectively.

Enclosure: One New Sheet (Sheet 3/3)

REMARKS

Drawings

The objection to the drawings is respectfully overcome by adding new Fig. 3, which shows how the first and second crank systems are coupled to the side wall assembly.

The “toothed belt” feature, designated by reference numeral 18, is illustrated in Fig. 1.

Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is kindly sought.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The rejection of claims 1 and 9 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, is overcome by amendments made herein.

With regard to claim 1, reference to “a side wall” has been replaced by reference to “a side wall assembly.” This change is made throughout the specification and claims. The specification, as originally filed, described side wall 40 as having “two panels 44 that form a lateral boundary of the side wall.” See paragraph [0021]. As the examiner correctly points out, the term “side wall” implies a single panel or wall. Therefore, “side wall assembly” is adopted to more clearly label the structure identified by reference numeral 40.

Claim 9 has been rewritten in independent form, and now positively claims an automatic stainer that includes a “base frame,” and the claimed “gate” is fixed with respect to the base frame. Support is found at paragraph [0021] of the specification.

Removal of the rejections under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

Claims 1-2 and 4-5 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by US 5356595 (Kanamori et al.). The rejection is acknowledged with respect to claims 1 and 2, but is traversed with respect to claims 4 and 5 as discussed below.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 4 and intervening claim 2, both of which are canceled. Consequently, claim 1 now has the scope of original claim 4.

Claim 1, as amended, includes the following limitation: “wherein each of the first and second crank systems (12, 14) includes a rotatably mounted shaft (20) and a pair of levers (19) arranged one at each end of the shaft (20).” This structure is not shown at Figs. 7 and 8 of Kanamori et al., nor is it described elsewhere in the reference.

Claim 5, which now depends from claim 1, requires "a plurality of rollers (17) rotatably mounted one on each of the levers (19)." This structure is also absent from Kanamori et al.

Therefore, applicant respectfully contends that claims 1 and 5 are patentable over Kanamori et al., and asks that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kanamori et al. The rejection is respectfully overcome by the amendment of parent claim 1 to include the limitations of original claim 4, as discussed above.

Removal of the obviousness rejection is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The indication of allowable subject matter in 6-11 is acknowledged with thanks. The rejection of claim 9 under 35 USC 112 is believed to be overcome. Claims 6 and 11 have not been rewritten in independent form at this stage because base claim 1, as amended, is believed to be allowable.

Allowance of claims 1, 3, and 5-11 is respectfully requested.

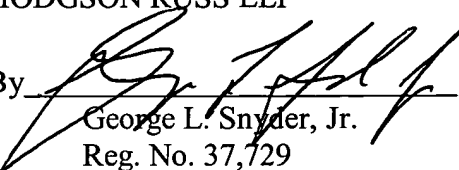
Conclusion

Favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully sought in light of the present amendments and remarks. If the Examiner has any questions, the undersigned attorney may be contacted at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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By


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Reply to Office Action of May 18, 2006

GLS/

Encs.

- One (1) New Sheet of Drawing
- Petition for Two-Month Extension of Time
- Fee Check for \$450.00 for Extension of Time
- Substitute Specification (Unmarked Version)
- Substitute Specification (Marked Version)

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